

Over 1,200 service workers in 7 bargaining units across the University of Toronto's 3 campuses

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February GMM Notice

Mark your calendar! Our next General Membership Meeting will be held on **Saturday, February 22nd, 2025 from 10AM-12PM.**

Location: Sidney Smith Hall, Room 1072 ([100 St George St](#)) and Virtually via Zoom (Hybrid)

Register [here](#) for the Zoom Link.

President's Message

Luke Daccord, CUPE 3261 President

Happy New Year CUPE 3261 Members!

I want to thank the membership for the vote of confidence re-electing me to a second term, with the largest election turnout we've ever recorded in the history of our Local. This will be my first full term as president, and we've got much work to come ahead of us.

Your trust is both an honour and a responsibility, and I'm committed to ensuring CUPE 3261 remains a strong, united force for our members. As we begin a new year, I want to reflect on our progress, highlight ongoing initiatives, and encourage you to get involved in shaping the future of our Local.

Bargaining Updates: U of T Press Heads to the Table Early This Year

While bargaining has wrapped up for many of our larger units, for others it's just beginning! Contracts have recently expired for nearly 150 part-time workers at the University of Toronto Press, including retail staff across all three campuses and part-time warehouse workers in North York. **Many of these workers face precarious conditions, low wages, and lack in other benefits like time off.**

We've seen in the past year how collective strength at the bargaining table can lead to meaningful wins. Let's stand behind these members as they organize and negotiate for better conditions on and off campus!

U of T Press members, and other CUPE 3261 members who are interested in supporting bargaining can sign up at 3261.cupe.ca/CAT

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President's Message (Continued)

Enforcing our Collective Agreements: Ongoing Grievances and Wins

Grievances are one of the main tools we have available to fight violations of our collective agreements and enforce our contract. In the past six months, we've filed 27 grievances, and as of now we are managing 35 active grievances in various stages of the process – this is nearly twice as many as years prior. Additionally, we estimate that for every grievance filed, there's two to three other workplace issues that end up resolved by myself, other union executives, or shop stewards through interventions with management before they reach the grievance stage.

Ongoing grievances cover the following issues:

- Unjust discipline ranging from verbal warnings to terminations (14)
- Failure to pay shift premiums or overtime (6)
- Failure to accommodate medical or family status, or other Sick Leave or LTD-related grievances (8)
- Failure to hire/promote (2)
- Other (5)

Examples of wins where union representatives were able to successfully overturn unjust decisions of the employer and enforce our contract in 2024 include:

- Overturning unjust denials of bereavement, paid personal, and jury duty leave
- Overturning and enforcing proper procedure for shift reassignments and lateral transfers for FTPT members, and equitable scheduling for Casual members

- Securing accommodations for medical or family status for members previously denied by the University
- Securing reimbursements for doctor's notes and boot allowances for members previously denied by the University
- Compelling the employer to investigate civility complaints in a timely manner
- Amendment or removal of unjust or incorrect disciplinary letters
- Enforcing language on job postings
- And many more!
- **Over \$100,000 of monetary settlements have been won for CUPE 3261 members in 2024 as a direct result of filing grievances**

Some of the issues described above may relate to the enforcement of a different CUPE 3261 CBA than the one you fall under. If you're having some of these issues, the first place to go is your collective agreement and then your shop steward!

Shop Stewards

Stewards are your union representatives in the workplace and are vital to enforcing our collective agreement. Our steward network is growing, having more than doubled our numbers since March, and elections will continue in the new year including in key areas like Caretaking on St. George Campus.

We're also planning for enhanced and more frequent steward training programs to ensure quicker responses and more proactive advocacy. Want to be more involved in the union, and play an active role in fighting to improve our working conditions? **Become a shop steward!** Stay tuned for election details in your workplace.

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President's Message (Continued)

New Collective Agreements

We're pleased to announce the finalized [FTPT 2023–2026 collective agreement](#) is now available on our website. Agreements for the Chestnut and Casual units are expected to be finalized in the coming weeks. All agreements we hope to have printed and distributed to workplaces starting in February.

Looking Ahead: Building Our Capacity

My long-term goal as President is to do my part in creating a fighting union structure that empowers workers, stewards, and executive members to act swiftly on workplace issues, and build organizing power. This means stronger training, better resources, and more collaboration across our Local and with other Locals on campus.

It also includes empowering stewards with training and shadowing opportunities to represent members in meetings with the employer. **Since September 1st, myself and increasingly other stewards and executive committee members have represented members in an estimated 100+ investigation, grievance or other types of meetings with management.** That's about 7-8 times a week that a CUPE 3261 representative represents a member in front of management.

This type of demand cannot be met without a robust organizational structure and strong complement of Stewards. Our Vice President Andrew Chilton has also been increasingly involved in this capacity where Stewards are not available.

All this is vital if we are to improve our capacity to enforce our collective agreement and push ahead on longer-term fights that we're facing in our workplaces. **If you're passionate about justice in your workplace, now's the time to get involved.** Join a committee, become a steward, or help support our ongoing campaigns.

Going into 2025

This past year has shown the power of an engaged and unified membership. From record election turnout to meaningful wins at the bargaining table, your participation is what made the difference.

Let's keep this momentum going.

Thank you again for your confidence and support. Together, we're building a stronger CUPE 3261 for all members.

Remember, U of T works because we do!

In solidarity,

Luke Daccord
President, CUPE 3261



Your Dues at Work: Using our Budget to Build a Stronger CUPE 3261

Jenny Luc, CUPE 3261 Secretary-Treasurer

Transparency and accountability are crucial when it comes to your hard-earned dues. Here's how we manage our Local's finances:

The Budget Process: Each year, I prepare a detailed budget outlining our projected income and expenses. This budget is then presented and discussed at our February General Membership Meeting (GMM). At this meeting, you, the members, have the final say. Your vote determines how we allocate resources throughout the year, ensuring your voice is heard in shaping our union's priorities.

Where Your Dues Go: As per our bylaws, members contribute 1.5% of earnings to support our union's work (remember, these dues are tax deductible!). A significant portion of this—57%—goes to CUPE National. As mandated by the CUPE Constitution, all Locals must pay this "per capita tax" to fund essential national union activities. These activities include providing a servicing representative, legal advice, educational resources, and, most importantly, a strike defence fund that offers financial support and strike pay to locals engaged in bargaining or strike action.

An additional 3% of your dues supports our provincial and regional affiliates (CUPE Ontario, the Ontario Federation of Labour, and the Toronto and York Region Labour Council), who advocate for worker rights and provide political support to our Local when necessary. Just over 8% covers the President's salary; they are the only full-time officer for the Local.

Around 25% of your dues are dedicated to releasing members from work as needed to attend to union duties. Examples include bargaining, committee meetings, executive duties, and steward responsibilities, as well as conventions, conferences and other educational workshops.

The remainder of your dues is primarily allocated to office, administrative, and campaign expenses. This includes essential items like office supplies, online software, printing, and costs associated with grievance arbitrations, and making donations to worthy causes. It also covers the costs of hosting social events like our portion of the Back-to-Work BBQ (including shuttle buses) and running campaigns, including swag, advertising, and organizing. Campaign costs are split with CUPE National in a cost-share program.

For a more detailed budget breakdown, please see the chart on the following page.

Navigating Our Current Financial Situation

When I became Treasurer in October 2023, we faced some financial challenges, including outstanding debts and a significant severance payment for our previous president. These factors, along with the costs associated with our recent bargaining round, have led to budget deficits. Despite this, we remain committed to responsible financial management and prioritizing spending on areas that help strengthen our union and support our members.

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Your Dues at Work: Using our Budget to Build a Stronger CUPE 3261 (continued)

At our General Membership Meeting on October 21, 2024, we introduced a motion to create a dedicated strike fund. This fund, subject to membership approval at our February GMM, will be built from our existing savings and used exclusively to financially support members during a strike. It will not be used for operational purposes.

Our union has always valued the tradition of hosting holiday parties. However, faced with a projected deficit this year, in our April GMM members approved the proposed budget which would not dip into our reserves to fund these parties which would have hindered our ability to build a strong strike fund – a crucial resource for protecting our members. Instead, we opted for a more cost-effective celebration and partnered with CUPE 3902 and CUPE 1230 to host a September BBQ.

Looking ahead, we're actively exploring cost-

saving measures and seeking ways to increase efficiency, all while maintaining our focus on building our capacity, supporting negotiations, grievance handling, and member support.

Share Your Voice on Our Budget! Join us at the upcoming February GMM to learn more about the proposed budget for 2025. Attendees have the opportunity to discuss and vote on amendments and it's approval. Your input is invaluable as we work together to build a stronger CUPE 3261!

If you have any questions related to our finances, don't hesitate to contact me at treasurer@cupe3261.ca. If you ever want to review any financial documents, I am happy to set up an appointment with you at our office.

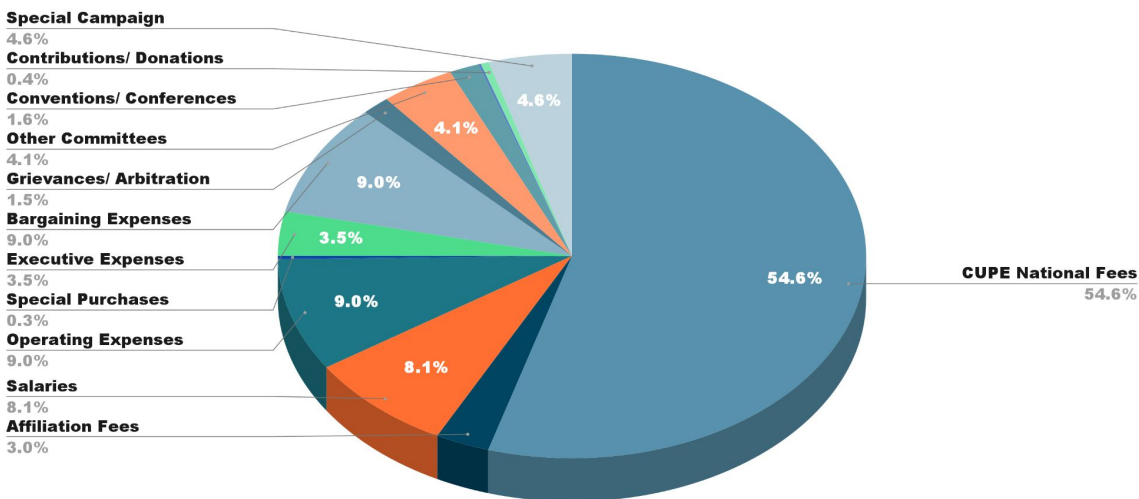
In solidarity,

Jenny Luc,

Secretary-Treasurer, CUPE 3261

CUPE 3261 Expenses (2024)

Total Dues Income (projected) - \$670,000



Unit Updates

Full-time & Part-time

Unit Representative: Jude Pereira

St. George Caretaking - New Clocking

System: A new time tracking system has been implemented for St. George campus caretaking staff. Members experiencing any issues or concerns with the new clocking in/out process are encouraged to contact us directly. Your FTPT unit representative can be reached at ftpt@cupe3261.ca

Casual

Unit Representative: Stanley Treivus

Friendly reminder! All casual members have **four paid sick days** available each year. Make sure you are getting paid! If you have taken a shift off due to sickness/injury in the last year and have not gotten paid, please inform your supervisor or contact casual@cupe3261.ca if you have any issues.

Hospitality staff also have access to a **\$75 allowance for uniforms**. If you are required to purchase your own clothes (e.g., black shirt, pants, shoes, etc.) keep your receipts and bring them to your supervisor to receive reimbursement.

We are currently reviewing workplaces where our new language of **same work for same pay** may apply.

If you perform the same duties as higher-paid full-time/part-time CUPE 3261 members at your workplace, we want to hear from you! Send an email to casual@cupe3261.ca

Throughout the next few months, we will be continuing to **recruit stewards** across all units and departments.

Casual workers can also become stewards and represent their co-workers. Stay tuned for further announcements!

89 Chestnut

Unit Representative: Raymond Chung

We're fighting to enforce the evening shift premium for members working 12:00 PM to 8:30 PM—a hard-fought gain from our last round of bargaining. The employer claims it doesn't apply, but we strongly disagree and are working to uphold our collective agreement. Stay tuned for updates!

Faculty Club

Unit Representative: Luis Gonzales

Nominations and elections for a new Faculty Club Unit Representative took place at our October membership meeting and elections were held Dec 16-18, 2024. We are pleased to welcome Luis Gonzales to the executive!

Health and Safety

If you have any questions or concerns related to Health and Safety at your workplace contact your Health and Safety Officer Kevin McDermott.

If you would like to get more involved with Health and Safety, we encourage you to fill out our committee signup form at 3261.cupe.ca/committees or you can contact Kevin directly.

He can be reached at healthandsafety@cupe3261.ca or 647-694-2389

Unit Updates *Continued*

U of T Press Part-Time Workers: The Fight for New Contracts Begins!

The part-time retail and warehouse collective agreements for the University of Toronto Press have expired, and **we're gearing up to negotiate strong new contracts for both units!**

The Part-Time Retail unit represents around 70-100 workers, primarily students, at U of T Bookstores. The Part-Time Warehouse unit represents approximately 70 members working at the North York Distribution Warehouse.

A townhall to kick-off negotiations was held on November 23rd and elections for the bargaining committees took place on December 8. Members can expect to receive a bargaining survey soon to gather input and learn more about our plan to win a fair contract.

As we learned in our previous negotiations, our power lies in our participation and unity.

Strong contracts aren't won at the bargaining table; they're won by organizing members at the workplace.

Follow the campaign at 3261.cupe.ca/press

If you are interested in being involved in the bargaining campaign for U of T Press, let your Press representative Chris Stanford know by emailing press@cupe3261.ca

Updates + News

Is Saturday at 10 AM Still the Best Time for Our General Membership Meetings?

Our bylaws currently require General Membership Meetings (GMMs) to be held on Saturdays from 10 AM to 12 PM, a rule in place for over a decade. The bylaws committee is reviewing if this time still works best for members.

GMMs are vital for union decisions, so we want them to be accessible to all. Share your input by completing a quick survey [here](#).

Get Involved: Join a CUPE 3261 Committee

Our new bylaws make it easier for members to shape our union! Consider joining a committee and making a difference:

- **Bylaws:** Review and recommend updates to union bylaws.
- **Communications:** Create content for newsletters, emails, and social media.
- **Elections:** Manage nominations, voting, and compliance for union elections.
- **Health & Safety:** Promote workplace safety and eliminate hazards.
- **Social:** (Currently inactive) Organized past social events to build community.

Visit 3261.cupe.ca/committees or click [here](#) to sign up. Deadline is Feb 7, 2025. New members will be confirmed at February's GMM! Terms are 2-years.

Defying the Odds: How Our FTPT and 89C Units Won on Health Costs

We achieved a major win this past spring! By strategically targeting a reduction in our members' share of health and dental costs, we successfully navigated around the employer's resistance to wage increases while also proactively addressing concerns about future premium hikes.

This resulted in a significant win for our members. For example, those with family health and dental benefits now keep an extra \$36.38 biweekly—effectively a 2% raise.

This achievement, unique to CUPE 3261 in this round of bargaining, sets a powerful precedent and demonstrates how our collective strength can break traditional bargaining patterns and deliver meaningful gains. **We are currently the only employee group across the entire university with these lower premium cost percentages.**

See the table below for a detailed breakdown of how this change impacted benefit costs (figures are for FTPT Unit, 89C may vary slightly):

		Benefit Cost Per Paycheque (FTPT)		
Benefit	Type	Without negotiated cost share improvement	→	With negotiated cost share improvements
Dental	Employee Share	20%	→	10%
	Individual	\$10.56	→	\$5.28
	Family	\$26.52	→	\$13.26
Extended Health	Employee Share	25%	→	15%
	Individual	\$16.10	→	\$9.66
	Family	\$57.80	→	\$34.68

UTEAU Statement on Free Speech

In November of last year, CUPE 3261 joined with other members of the University of Toronto Employees' Associations and Unions (UTEAU) coalition in opposition to the "User Guide to U of T Policies on Protest".

The Guide introduces a number of new limits on our community members including time restrictions, no blocking doorways or

roadways, and undefined limits on noise. This suppression of free speech would impose significant limitations on protesting on campus, including our ability to picket and demonstrate during a strike action.

To see the full letter on our website, [click here](#).

Bylaw Amendments Update: What's New and What's Next

Earlier this year, you voted to approve a series of bylaw amendments. The CUPE National President has approved most of these amendments, and our updated bylaws are now available on the website.

Here's a summary of the approved changes:

- **Easier updates:** We have a clear process for making future changes to our bylaws.
- **Dedicated Bylaw Committee:** This committee will regularly review and improve our bylaws.
- **More member involvement:** It's now easier for members to join committees through a formal process
- **Administrative updates:** We've added the 89 Chestnut and Faculty Club committees to the bylaws and updated some terminology.

CUPE National rejected two of our proposed bylaw amendments. The first involved shortening the notice period for bylaw amendments from 60 days to 30 days, which conflicted with the National Constitution. The second rejected amendment clarified that the president and executive can call special membership meetings, but a process already exists within our current bylaws.

We appreciate your participation in the bylaw amendment process! These changes will help our union operate more effectively and improve member voice. The Bylaws Committee continues to review our bylaws and you can expect to see more proposals in our upcoming membership meetings.

Notice of Motion to Establish a Strike Fund

At the October GMM the executive proposed establishing a Strike and Defense Fund. The motion will be discussed and voted on in our February GMM. The motion is as follows:

\$650,000 of the Local's treasury will be set aside for the newly established Strike and Defense Fund. Within one (1) year a contribution plan will be established for the continual funding of the plan.

The sole purpose of this fund shall be for the Local to top up the strike pay a member receives from CUPE National in the event of a strike. As such, in order for a member to be eligible for the strike pay top up provided by the Local they must be in receipt of CUPE National Strike Pay in accordance with the rules, regulations, and eligibility requirements set in the CUPE National Strike Fund Regulations.

So long as the fund remains solvent, CUPE Local 3261 members meeting the requirements set above shall receive a top up of \$150/week (totalling \$500/week when combined with CUPE National strike pay as of October 2024).

The Secretary Treasurer will report as to the status of the fund at each regular executive and membership meeting.

“Three locals, one goal: How coordination transformed their bargaining strategy”

We are currently featured in CUPE National's latest magazine! Visit cupe.ca/counterpoint to read more about our historic bargaining campaign.

CUPE 3261

A vital part of the university community